



Morphology and Histochemistry of Cladodes of *Nopalea cochenillifera* (L.) Salm-Dyck (Cactaceae)

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SUMMARY. Morphoanatomical parameters, for macroscopic and microscopic analyses of the cladodes of *Nopalea cochenillifera*, plant recognized traditionally like medicinal, allow his authenticity. The phylloclades have wavyness and areoles with three straight and hyaline thorns. The uniseriate epidermis has parallelocytic stomata and mucilaginous cells, followed by an annular collenchyma and a palisade parenchyma on average with eight cell layers. The vascular region is constituted by isolated vascular bundles of the open collateral type. The central cylinder is composed by a parenchymatic medulla. The mucilage structures and the druses of calcium oxalate are present in cortical region in and central cylinder. They are in bigger number near to the vascular bundles. The druses also take place in the first layer of the collenchyma. These morphoanatomical characteristics, when taken together, are consistent in the botanical control of quality of this vegetable sort.

KEY WORDS: Cactaceae, Histochemistry, Morphoanatomical, *Nopalea*, Pharmacobotany.

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